



Guidance for Interpretation of Mold Culture Results

There are no government-issued numerical standards for mold culture interpretation. However, some environmental companies, industrial hygienists, and other IAQ professionals use the following arbitrary numbers for guidance in interpreting microbial survey results.

The final mold interpretation should not be based solely on numbers! Information gathered from the walk-through investigation of the area is very significant, including sources of moisture or high humidity, and signs of visible mold growth. In air samples, it is important to consider the type and concentration of fungi indoors, as compared to outdoors or a non-complaint area. One should consider the indoor: outdoor fungal count ratio, the presence/absence of certain fungi indoors versus outdoors, the genus/species of predominant fungi indoors versus outdoors, and whether the fungi detected indoors are allergenic and/or toxigenic.

Bioaerosol

<250	CFU/m ³	Low/Normal
250-1,000	CFU/m ³	Moderate/Borderline
>1,000	CFU/m ³	Active Growth/Sporulation
>5,000	CFU/m ³	Very Active Growth/Sporulation

Swab/Wipe

<100	CFU/in ²	No Growth/Background
<10,000	CFU/in ²	Low/Normal Growth
10,000-100,000	CFU/in ²	Moderate Growth
100,000-1,000,000	CFU/in ²	Active Growth/Sporulation
>1,000,000	CFU/in ²	Very Active Growth/Sporulation

Bulk substrate

<100	CFU/g	No Growth
<25,000	CFU/g	Low/Normal Growth
25,000-200,000	CFU/g	Moderate Growth
200,000-1,000,000	CFU/g	Active Growth/Sporulation
>1,000,000	CFU/g	Very Active Growth/Sporulation

Micro-vac Dust

<5,000	CFU/ft ²	Low/Normal
5,000-25,000	CFU/ft ²	Moderate/Borderline
25,000-75,000	CFU/ft ²	Active Growth/Sporulation
>75,000	CFU/ft ²	Very Active Growth/Sporulation

Definitions

CFU = Colony Forming Unit

Colony = A mass of branching hyphae with or without spores, generally of one species and potentially started from one spore, cell, or propagule.